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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

SPEECH

1866

OF

HON. SIDNEY PERHAM, OF MAINE,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 21, 1866.

The House, as in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, having under consideration the President's annual message—

Mr. PERHAM said:

Mr. SPEAKER: During four long and bloody years the people of this country have struggled for national life and the vindication of the imperishable truths of the Declaration of Independence. Nearly half a million of newly made graves, the lamentations of mourning mothers, widows, and orphans, the presence of maimed and battle-scarred soldiers in the streets, and a debt of enormous proportions attest to the fierceness of the conflict. But thanks to our noble officers and men who, in the hour of danger, left the endearments of home and kindred, and, baring their breasts to the storm of battle, triumphantly bore our flag on a thousand battle-fields, until the weapons of treason were shattered in the hands of their supporters, and the supremacy of the national authority established throughout our entire jurisdiction. A grateful nation will do honor to its living heroes, and the people will make pilgrimages of love and affection to the graves of the slain.

The old ship of state which our fathers, eighty years ago, built according to the best model of that day, and freighted with the fondest hopes of the world, has recently encountered a terrible storm. During its severe trial it has braved the winds and billows, at times appearing almost engulfed in the angry surges, then proudly rising in her majesty, the admiration of her friends and the envy of her enemies, she outrode the storm and anchored in the peaceful waters. All this unparalleled trial could but reveal whatever defect existed in the material or construction. Some timbers have been parted, some holes in the bottom and sides have been made, into which the waters have for some time been rushing, requiring a portion of the crew constantly at the pumps. These holes must be stopped up; some slight repairs to the old ship must be made for her own safety and that of the passengers and crew. We have also exchanged a portion of the freight for an increased number of passengers in the shape of citizens of African descent. Some portion of the vessel heretofore used for the storage of freight must now be appropriated for the accommodation of these additional passengers. Their comfort and well-being must be provided for. They cannot be disposed of as you would store away bags and barrels and boxes. Such reconstruction must take place as will best secure the rights, comfort, happiness, and harmony of all on board. And it is absurd to object to these necessary and indis-

pensable changes in the fear that the old ship might not be recognized.

We have been sent here by our constituents, charged with the important duty of reconstructing this Union in accordance with the enlightened and progressive spirit of the age, and on the basis of complete and impartial justice. They bid us ask nothing more, and charge us, by all the sacredness of our obligations, to accept nothing less. They send us here with no vindictive spirit. The horrors of Fort Pillow and Andersonville have inspired no feelings of revenge. They justly feel themselves masters of the situation, and will not stoop to exult over a fallen foe. While they demand that "treason shall be made odious," and that ample guarantees shall be given against the recurrence of another rebellion, they are willing to accept the least possible amount of punishment and concession that will secure these results. In this spirit I address myself to the discussion of the important questions arising from the present condition of the States recently in rebellion, and whether they are in a suitable condition to be entitled to representation in Congress and intrusted with all the rights and powers of loyal States.

Much has been said and written upon this subject, and the theories are about as numerous as the people who advocate them. But, for our purpose, it is of but little importance whether we regard these States as dead, according to the theory of some members of Congress, or their functions suspended, as the President declares. In any view of this subject these great practical facts remain. In that portion of the South recently in rebellion there is territory, limited and defined by State lines, within the jurisdiction and subject to the control of the United States. And there are people, citizens of the United States and owing allegiance thereto, but without State governments and without any power of themselves to create them. Theorize as we may on this subject, this is the common ground to which we must all come.

The President recognized this principle when he prescribed the manner in which these States are to be reorganized. If they are States in the Union now that the military power of the rebellion has been destroyed, entitled to the rights of loyal States, by what authority has the President exercised, practically, their judicial, executive, and legislative powers? By what authority has he appointed provisional governors, authorized conventions to form constitutions, prescribed the qualifications of voters for delegates to such conventions, and declared what the constitutions when formed should be, and

exercised numerous other powers which he could not exercise in the loyal States?

Finding these States, then, at the close of the war without State governments and without power of themselves to create governments, it becomes our duty, in accordance with that provision of the Constitution which makes it the duty of "the United States to guaranty to every State in this Union a republican form of government," to provide for the establishment of State governments that shall correspond with the spirit of this and the other provisions of the Constitution, and to guaranty in the strongest possible manner the perpetuity of such form of government. This is just what we have been trying to do for the last five years, but with partial success.

It is the duty of the United States, not only to see that new States to be admitted have such governments, but to "guaranty a republican form of government" in the old States as well. It makes no difference whether the rebellious States are dead or living; the duty of the United States is the same. It is just as much our duty to see that the government of a State continues republican in form as to require it as a condition of admission. Now, what is a "republican form of government?" It is one in which the republican principle is fully recognized; in the common acceptance of the term, it is a government by the people, one in which the rights of all the citizens are equally respected. Can we guaranty a republican form of government in the States recently in rebellion by pursuing the policy heretofore adopted? The President, on his accession to the Presidency, with the best of intentions, as we are bound to believe, inaugurated a policy which he declared to be an experiment, to be modified or abandoned whenever it should become necessary. He has been more than generous toward the late rebels, pardoning them, restoring to them their property, giving them in many instances the entire control of new State governments, doing everything that it is possible for man to do, in the way of kindness, to gain their confidence and good will and secure a compliance with the requirements of good citizenship. But have these acts been reciprocated? Instead of growing better and more loyal under the President's policy, they have grown worse and more disloyal. Instead of accepting in good faith the results of the war, they openly declare that they are only subdued for the time being, and they will now rely on their influence inside the organization of the Government to accomplish what they have failed to do outside by the bullet. Their policy is to render it so uncomfortable and hazardous for loyal men to live among them as to compel them to leave. Many hundreds of northern men who have made investments and attempted to make themselves homes in these States have been driven away. Others have been murdered in cold blood as a warning to all northern men who should attempt to settle in the South. Officers charged with the execution of the laws have been intimidated by threats of violence, and brutally murdered for a faithful discharge of duty.

In Kentucky the courts hold that officers and men who have been in the Union Army are personally responsible for arrests made and property taken during the war by order of their superiors. Many have been imprisoned, and actions are now pending against thirty-five hundred more in pursuance of this ruling of the courts; while officers and men who have been in the rebel army are by the same courts exempted from such liability because of their rights as belligerents. This is but foreshadowing what will take place in all the seceded States as soon as the military force shall be withdrawn.

Governor Brownlow, of Tennessee, who did more, perhaps, than any other man to secure the nomination of Andrew Johnson at Baltimore, in a recent address said:

"You may think it a little strange that I give such counsel. I do it because if General Thomas were to take away his soldiers and pull up stakes and leave here, you would not be allowed to occupy this school-room a week; and if General Thomas and his military forces were to go away and leave us, this Legislature, at the head of which I am placed, would be broken up by a mob in forty-eight hours."

On the 8th of March, 1866, he wrote to a member of this House a letter, from which I make some extracts. He says:

"Since pardons have been so multiplied, and no man has been punished, they have everywhere become impudent and defiant, until in most counties in Middle and West Tennessee it is disreputable to have been a Union man, or, as a southern man, to have served in the Union Army—and matters are growing worse—the reconstructed traitors openly cursing loyal men, and threatening them with shooting or hanging; boasting that they have the President on their side, while we all feel that the President's policy is ruinous to us." * * * * *

"Every rebel in all this country, every McClellan man, and every ex-guerrilla chief, are loud and enthusiastic in praise of the President. The men who but a few months since were cursing him for an abolitionist and traitor, and wishing him executed, are now for executing all who dare oppose his policy—or even doubt its success."

"There is twice the amount of bitterness and intolerance in the South to-day toward the Union and everything northern that there was at the time of Lee's surrender. Abuse of Union men, of the radical majority in Congress, and self-assumed superiority on the part of the southern chivalry have arisen to such a height that loyal men cannot travel on a steamboat or in a railroad car without being insulted. As it was during the war, so it is now; all concessions from the North or from the majority in Congress are regarded as evidences of fear. All the old rebel presses of 1861 and many new ones are in full blast, attacking Congress and the North with ultimate vengeance and boasting of southern prowess. The most popular men in the largest portion of Tennessee to-day are the men most distinguished for their hostility to the North and what they are pleased to term the radical Congress, and they are the class of men selected to fill offices, as the late county elections show. The same is true of the entire South, only to a greater extent."

* * * * *

"Why, sir, many of them are expecting the President to disperse Congress with the bayonet, as Cromwell dispersed the Long Parliament. The southern breast is being rapidly fired to deeds of valor; and all this, and more, as I believe, has been caused by the mistakes of the President. His plan of trusting rebels with their State governments has had an effect exactly the opposite of what he intended. It has ruined the prospects of the Union men, and they feel that there is no safety for them unless Congress shall choose to protect them. Even three days ago General Thomas had to send troops into Marshall county, some sixty miles distant, to protect loyal men and freedmen who were fleeing for safety and coming to the city."

North Carolina has been regarded one of the most loyal of the rebellious States; but, judg-

ing from the following from the Raleigh Standard, this State, too, is following her sisters in rebellion in the work of rewarding rebels and punishing loyal men:

"The town of Wilmington, in this State, has recently passed by popular election from the hands of loyal Union men into the hands of original secessionists and latter-day war men. The same is true as to the county court of New Hanover, under the appointment of magistrates made by the Legislature. It is considered disreputable in Wilmington to be an outspoken unconditional Union man. General Robert Ransom, lately of the confederate service, has been chosen marshal of the town, with a salary of \$2,000. General R. is, we presume, still unpardoned."

Colonel Stokes, one of the true men elected to this House from Tennessee, in a recent speech said:

"We know that admission now would destroy the Union element of the States. Congress is doing right in holding them back. When the rebel armies first surrendered, there was everywhere a disposition toward loyalty; but I stand here to-night to say that there is now a feeling as bitter toward the Union men of the South as there was in 1860-61. And the facts have proved that Congress, in its cool and deliberate treatment of the matter, deserves the thanks of all Union men, in giving an opportunity for these rebels to show their hands. Time will show that Congress was right."

This view of the spirit of the South is confirmed by the necessity which prompted General Grant to issue an order, on the 12th of January last, directing the military power to protect the loyal citizens of the rebellious States from the prejudice and violence of their rebel neighbors, and further to protect colored persons from prosecutions charged with offenses for which white persons are not prosecuted or punished in the same manner and degree.

All the accounts we receive from loyal sources, from Grant, from Schurz, from the agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, from every loyal man from the North who has visited the South, from every truly loyal man in the South, by petitions and entreaties, all agree that, if the military force should be removed, it would be impossible for Union men, black or white, to remain there. And yet the reconstructed Governor of Mississippi says they (the Union soldiers) are not needed, that they are "a disturbing element, a nuisance, and a blighting curse."

While important service in the rebellion is a sure passport to political and social position and distinction, a systematic effort is made to brand every man with disgrace who has been true to the Government, thus openly and defiantly rewarding treason and punishing loyalty. It is a fact, to which I challenge contradiction, that in spite of all the caution, expostulations, arguments, and demands of the President in regard to the election of loyal men in the States he is attempting to reconstruct, with every consideration of policy urging them to a decent regard, for the time being at least, to the loyal sentiments of the country, the men who have been the most active and efficient in the rebellion are the most popular at the polls, and receive the largest vote. It is very true that some good men, under the pressure of circumstances, have been elected. A few such have been sent here as claimants of seats in this House—men who would honor the position they claim, and with whom we should all be most

happy to be associated as members of this Congress, could we feel that they had a loyal constituency, able to maintain a loyal government.

In many instances the disloyalty of the persons voting, or the persons elected, has been so notorious that the President has been compelled to declare the election void, and withhold the certificate of election, or forbid their entering upon the duties of the office. The Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster General both declare that they are unable to find loyal men enough in those States, who are willing to take the prescribed oath, to fill the offices under their Departments, and we are called upon to repeal or modify the oath so as to allow these men, just out of the rebellion, to accept some of the most responsible and lucrative offices under the same Government they have been laboring for four long years to destroy. To a proposition so flagrantly wrong and perilous I will not consent by my vote. If there are not loyal men enough in the South who have been true to the Union to fill these offices, I would appoint some of the heroes of the war, and bid them take part in the administration of the government in the States they have saved by their valor.

Major General Terry, in an order issued at Richmond, Virginia, January 24, 1866, referring to a statute passed at the present session of the Legislature of Virginia entitled "A bill providing for the punishment of vagrants," says:

"The ultimate effect of the statute will be to reduce the freedmen to a condition of servitude worse than that from which they have been emancipated—a condition which will be slavery in all but its name."

A law recently passed by the Louisiana Legislature provides that any one who shall feed, harbor, or secrete any person who shall leave his employer without his consent shall be liable to a fine or imprisonment; thus reviving, as far as possible, the principles of the old slave code. These facts might be multiplied indefinitely, but enough have been presented to show that, while these people accept the fact of emancipation, they believe the principle is wrong, and intend to make the condition of the freedmen as near that of slavery as possible. There are, to be sure, very many good and loyal men in the South, and had they the control of the States all would be well; but the unwelcome truth is the rebels are in the ascendency. Loyalty is the exception and disloyalty the rule.

Governor Cox, of Ohio, in his report of the President's conversation on the 21st of February last makes him speak of what he is doing in those States for the purpose of "stimulating loyalty" no less than six times in that short conversation. I fear that too much of the little loyalty we see manifested by these men is of the "stimulated" kind; that it is a sickly plant at most, and will die out as soon as the stimulation shall cease. I have no confidence in this "stimulating" business. My own observation proves to my mind that, though you may get a little more out of a subject for a day by administering stimulants, in the end he will sink just as much below his natural condition as he has been raised above it. The facts in

this case show that the President's southern patient has been stimulated too long, that the medicine has ceased to have any effect, and he is rapidly sinking, and is now even lower than when the first dose was administered.

This is a sad picture, but it represents the spirit of the men who rule a large portion of the eleven seceded States to-day, and but for the presence of the military force would rule them all. Mr. Lincoln held that those States were "out of their practical relations with the Union," and no one will deny that this state of things exists at the present time. The great work before us is to restore these States to their "practical relations with the Union" at the earliest moment consistent with the future security, peace, and perpetuity of the Government.

On whom devolves the duty of deciding when these States are in a condition to be represented here? Not the Executive. No such power has ever been delegated to him. Not the House of Representatives or the Senate acting independent of each other, but the law-making power of the Government alone is competent to perform this important duty. In confirmation of this view of the subject I add the express declarations of the President himself, through the Secretary of State. On July 24, 1865, Mr. Seward telegraphed to the "provisional governor" of Mississippi:

"The government of the State will be provisional only, until the civil authorities shall be restored with the approval of Congress."

So, on September 12, 1865, he wrote to Governor Marvin, of Florida:

"It must, however, be distinctly understood that the restoration to which your proclamation refers will be subject to the decision of Congress."

Thus it is seen that, as late as September, 1865, both these distinguished men agreed with the majority of Congress that the readmission of these States is to be subject to "the approval of Congress."

In accordance with the President's and Mr. Seward's original plan, I hold that it is the duty of Congress to take the whole subject into consideration, as it is now doing, and decide just what guarantees it is absolutely necessary to require to secure equal and exact justice to all the citizens, and to prevent the recurrence of another rebellion in the future. This should be secured by such constitutional amendments as cannot fail to accomplish the object; and, on the ratification of these amendments by a vote of the people of these States, as a pledge of their sincerity and loyalty, I would allow them to be represented in Congress on an equal footing with the other States.

I venture to suggest some of the guarantees which, in my judgment, would best secure the well-being and mutual interest both of the North and South.

1. The leading intelligent traitors who knowingly and willingly went into the rebellion—those denominated by President Johnson "conscious traitors"—should be deprived of all political rights for the present at least, and until they shall have brought forth fruits meet for repentance, or the loyal sentiment of the States shall have become so strong as to render

them powerless for evil. Aside from a few leaders, who by their official position or infernal conduct have been the representatives of treason, on whose heads should be visited the extreme penalty of a violated law as a vindication of the supremacy of law and order, and a notice to coming generations that henceforth "treason is a crime to be punished and made odious," I would allow them to live in the country if they desire, and would heap coals of fire on their heads by securing to them full and complete protection of their persons, and the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor. This is all they expected when they laid down their arms; and, it appears to me, is all a rebel possessed of common decency would ask. Even Lucifer himself never had the presumption to insult the Almighty by going back after the overthrow of his rebellion and asking to be permitted to assist in the administration of the government he attempted to destroy, much less to claim the privilege as a right. There is no evidence that these men love the old Union any better now than when they were openly fighting against it. Their arms have been broken, but they are defiant still. They may accept the fact of emancipation, but they still believe that slavery is the best condition for the colored race, and it is but reasonable to suppose that as far as possible this idea would, if they were allowed to govern, be embodied in law, and carried out in their intercourse with the colored people. If I believed slavery to be right, and the relation of master and slave the best condition for both whites and blacks, I should use my influence to make the condition of the colored population as near that of slavery as possible, and if I disliked the form of Government under which I live as those men professed to hate the old Union, I should not cease my efforts to supplant the hated Government and establish one more in accordance with my own idea. Nothing less than this could be expected of me. Is it reasonable to suppose that the recent rebels would do less? Do not the acts of the Legislatures of many of these States just quoted answer the question with alarming significance?

The disloyal leaders who vacated their seats in this Hall in 1861, after having spent four years in an infamous attempt to destroy the Union by force of arms, and in vilifying the Constitution of our fathers without so much as professing to love the "old Government" any better than when they were fighting against it, with the blood of four hundred thousand murdered patriots still unwashed from their hands, ask to come back into the Halls of Congress; and they and some others in high and low places seem to think it very strange that they are not permitted at once to become the guardians of the institutions they so abhor. Before such cool affrontery Satan's rebellion in heaven falls into insignificance. They have been here before and basely violated their oaths and took advantage of their official position to overthrow the Constitution and Government they had sworn to protect. They are no better now, and we should be false to our high trust to allow

these men to come back again to reenact the scenes of 1861.

Suppose in this contest the rebels had succeeded, the old Government been overthrown, and the confederate government, based on the divinity of slavery and the right of secession, had become the government of this nation, what would have become of us here? If we had been permitted to live, we might have thought ourselves fortunate. But suppose the members of this Congress to have been elected to the Congress of the new government. Our Democratic friends on the other side, who have always sympathized with the rebels in their treason and now regard them truly loyal, would find themselves very much at home, and might very properly coöperate with the confederate statesmen and ex-rebel generals in the work of such a Congress. But an unconditional Union man who hates slavery and treason and loves liberty could only go there for the purpose of molding the Government in accordance with his own views. Just so will it be with these ex-rebels if we admit them to legislate for a Government for which they have no sympathy. It will be like taking to our bosoms and warming into life the scorpion whose sting is death. If we should err in this matter and keep the States in question out (or in the position they voluntarily assumed) a little longer than is absolutely necessary, the error can be corrected; but if they are admitted with treason in the hearts of the governing classes of the people the evil may be irreparable.

In this view of our duty in regard to the treatment of leading traitors I utter no new declarations. These are the settled convictions of a large portion of the Union men of the country. They were the principles boldly advocated by President Johnson in his better days, before his head became giddy with power, and southern rebels and northern copperheads led him captive at their will. In the Senate of the United States, March 2, 1861, he said:

"Show me who has been engaged in these conspiracies, who has fired upon our flag, who has given instructions to take our forts and custom-houses and arsenals and dock-yards, and I will show you a traitor. Were I President of the United States I would do as Thomas Jefferson did, in 1806, with Aaron Burr. I would have them arrested, and, if convicted within the meaning and scope of the Constitution, by the eternal God I would execute them."

In a speech made in Nashville, Tennessee, June 9, 1864, indicating his acceptance of the nomination made at the Baltimore convention, two days before, he said:

"Treason must be made odious and traitors must be punished and impoverished. Their great plantations must be seized, and divided into small farms, and sold to honest, industrious men. The day for protecting the lands and negroes of these authors of rebellion is past. It is high time it was."

"But in calling a convention to restore the State, who shall restore and reestablish it? Shall the man who gave his influence and his means to destroy the Government? Is he to participate in the great work of reorganization? Shall he who brought this misery upon the State be permitted to control its destinies? If this be so, then all this precious blood of our brave soldiers and officers so freely poured out will have been wantonly spilled. All the glorious victories won by our noble armies will go for naught, and all the battle-fields which have been sown with dead heroes

during the rebellion will have been made memorable in vain."

I quote further from the same speech in proof of my statement:

"Why all this carnage and devastation? It was that treason might be put down and traitors punished. Therefore I say that traitors should take a back seat in the work of restoration. I say that the traitor has ceased to be a citizen, and in joining the rebellion has become a public enemy. He forfeited his right to vote with loyal men when he renounced his citizenship and sought to destroy our Government. We say to the most honest and industrious foreigner who comes from England or Germany to dwell among us, and to add to the wealth of the country, 'Before you can be a citizen you must stay here for five years.' If we are so cautious about foreigners, who voluntarily renounce their homes to live with us, what should we say to the traitor, who, although born and reared among us, has raised a parricidal hand against the Government which always protected him? My judgment is that he should be subjected to a severe ordeal before he is restored to citizenship. A fellow who takes the oath merely to save his property, and denies the validity of the oath, is a perjured man, and not to be trusted. Before these repenting rebels can be trusted, let them bring forth the fruits of repentance. He who helped to make all these widows and orphans, who draped the streets of Nashville in mourning, should suffer for his great crime."

These are precisely the doctrines I advocate to-day, and, in the name of the people I represent, I call upon the President to coöperate with Congress in giving them practical application.

2. All the civil and political rights belonging to citizenship, including the right of suffrage, should be guaranteed to all loyal citizens, irrespective of race or color. The loyal men, white and black, who have always loved the old flag and were true to it in the darkest hours, can now be trusted to aid in the administration of the Government.

Right here it is objected that by placing the colored people on an equality before the law with the whites you will bring about a war of races. And this cry has been heard from the lowest groggery in the land up through all the grades of society to the White House. Do not these people understand that the measures they propose are the only measures that can possibly bring about a war of races in this country? What creates a war of races? It is the application of one law to one race and another to another race in the same community. It is granting privileges to one race which you withhold from the other, thus engendering jealousy, hatred, revenge, and terminating in open hostility. I admit that one hundred and fifty thousand men, trained to war, representing four or five million people stung to madness by the refusal of the Government to recognize their manhood, would be a dangerous element in any Government. But give the colored man the common rights that belong to man, give him an equal opportunity with the whites, subject him to the same laws, award to him the privileges you claim for yourself, bid him God speed in his efforts to raise himself from his degraded condition, and a war of races will be impossible.

Our fathers gave the right of suffrage to free colored men in nearly all the States in the Union, and without any evil results. The idea that the black man has no rights that white men are bound to respect is of modern invention.

We have paid dearly for our refusal to do

justice to the colored race. Had we emancipated and enfranchised the colored men when Mr. Seward declared the "irrepressible conflict," secession would have been impossible. These four years of blood and anguish have been the fearful punishment for our refusal to obey the demands of God's eternal justice. The sins of the fathers as well as our own have fallen upon us with terrible consequences, and are to be visited upon coming generations in the shape of an enormous debt. And now, though we have given the colored man—what we had no right to withhold from him—his liberty, if we fail to give him the common rights of citizens we may depend on still further judgments from Him who made the black men black, and the white men white, and stamped upon both His own image.

When Mr. Lincoln, on the 1st day of January, 1863, proclaimed liberty to the bondmen, freedom to a race in slavery, and invoked upon the act "the blessing of God and the considerate judgment of mankind," he meant something more than the mere form of freedom. That act was intended to carry with it the common rights of manhood. And when we called on the black men to assist in saving our imperiled country, we did not intend to avail ourselves of his services on the field of danger and then abandon him to the tender mercies of his former master, made doubly malignant because of his efficient aid to the Union cause. Unless we protect him in his civil rights his liberty is but a solemn mockery. The colored man, by rallying to the standard of a nation which had given him no rights except those of a slave, and bearing aloft our flag in the thickest of the fight, has earned his rights to all the privileges of a man. And if we deny him those privileges a God of justice will frown upon us, and mankind will curse us for our perfidy.

The practical question presented is, whether we will restore the government of the States recently in rebellion to the loyal or disloyal men. Will you trust the men who were hunted down by dogs, plundered of their property, imprisoned in loathsome dungeons, compelled to see their wives and little ones cruelly treated, exiled from their homes, driven to the mountains, to caves, and rocks, compelled to see their loyal associates shot down like dogs, dragged to the scaffold and hung as felons, and subjected to all the outrages and indignities that devils could invent, and still stood true to the old flag, faithful among the faithless, or the men who were the authors and active perpetrators of all these cruelties? Shall we give heed to the entreaties of the men who have always been true and never faltered, and who now implore us to protect them from the rage of their rebel neighbors, or the recent traitors in arms who come to us with their hands still reeking with the blood of our murdered brothers, and, without any evidence of sorrow for what they have done, or the least signs of regret for their stupendous wickedness, demand an opportunity to accomplish by the ballot and other civil influences what they have failed to do by the sword?

Some say if you give the ballot to the negro his old master will control it. So when we talked about putting them in the Army it was said they would turn against us and fight for their old masters; but when were soldiers truer than they? Go ask at Port Hudson, at Milliken's Bend, and Fort Wagner, where their spirits went up from their black bodies to their God in defense of liberty, the Constitution, and the Union, and tell me whether these men can be depended on. The men who will peril their lives on the field of battle in defense of our Constitution will vote for it if you will give them an opportunity.

It is objected that the colored people are too ignorant to be intrusted with the ballot, but it is an objection that applies only to color. The most ignorant foreigner that ever landed from an emigrant ship, the most benighted poor white in all the South, is deemed a safe depositary of this important trust, providing he has no shade of African blood in his veins. Scarcely a black man can be found in the whole country who was so ignorant that he did not know and choose the right side during the war, while his intelligent master was generally on the wrong side. I would sooner trust a loyal black man with the ballot than a disloyal white man. The argument that would exclude a poor or ignorant colored man from the right to vote would also exclude the poor or ignorant white man. The more this question is discussed the stronger are the convictions of the people "that the only way to secure and perpetuate our Government in its purity is to confer upon all the races of men equal rights, or such opportunities as will prepare them for the enjoyment of equal rights." And the time is not far distant when the people of this country will acquiesce in this principle as fully as they now do in the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery, which our Democratic friends so strenuously opposed.

In these views I also find myself sustained by the declarations of the President. In his Nashville speech, before referred to, he said:

"If there be but five thousand men in Tennessee loyal to the Constitution, loyal to freedom, loyal to justice, these true and faithful men should control the work of reorganization and reformation absolutely."

In August, 1865, the President recommended to Governor Sharkey, of Mississippi, the extension of the franchise "to all persons of color who can read the Constitution of the United States in English and write their names, and to all persons of color who own real estate valued at not less than \$250 and pay taxes thereon."

In October last the President was in favor of negro suffrage. He then said to Major Stearns:

"My position here is different from what it would be if I were in Tennessee. There I should try to introduce negro suffrage gradually: first, those who had served in the Army; those who could read and write; and perhaps a property qualification for others, say \$200 or \$250."

In October, 1864, just before his election, Andrew Johnson addressed a gathering of colored people in Nashville, and said:

"I, Andrew Johnson, hereby proclaim liberty, full, broad, unconditional liberty, to every man in Tennessee. I will be your Moses, and lead you through the Red Sea of struggle and servitude to a future of liberty and peace. Rebellion and slavery shall no

more pollute our State. Loyal men, whether white or black, shall govern the State."

3. We should forever prohibit the payment of the confederate and State debts contracted in aid of the rebellion, and prohibit the nation and the States from making payment for emancipated slaves. Already the less cautious rebels are talking about being able, by the aid of northern Democrats, when they shall be represented in Congress, to compel the General Government to assume their debt or repudiate the whole. James L. Orr, the so-called Governor of South Carolina, says:

"I therefore cherish the hope that Congress will, as soon as the public debt is provided for, make some just and equitable arrangement to make the citizens of the South some compensation for the slaves manumitted by the United States authorities."

Hon. John Covode, in his account of an interview with Governor Wells, of Louisiana, says:

"He began to make demands with regard to what Government should do. He said that Government must pay for slaves that had been emancipated, for it had taken or destroyed property enough for that purpose."

This is the programme now shadowed forth, and which, if not put to rest forever, will be a source of infinite trouble to us hereafter. We owe it to the loyal tax-payers North and South to provide that they shall not be taxed to pay the expenses of a war to destroy the nation's life; and we owe it to the holders of our national securities, as well as our own credit and financial stability, to provide by amendment to the fundamental law that none of these pretended claims shall ever be paid.

4. The doctrine of secession should be repudiated and branded with everlasting infamy. This proposition is too plain to need argument now. The experience of the last four years, the graves of four hundred thousand fallen heroes, the emblems of mourning all over the country, all speak in thunder tones, demanding that this doctrine hereafter shall find no place among the possibilities of the country.

The Union members of Congress earnestly desire to avoid any conflict with the President. They will have none except so far as he repudiates the principles which gave him the election in 1864. They ask nothing that the principles heretofore expressed by him, and enforced in his administration of affairs in the States recently in rebellion, do not absolutely justify and require.

But it is objected that our plan contemplates amendments to the Constitution, and the President says, "Amendments to the Constitution ought not to be so frequent that their effect would be that it would lose all its prestige and dignity." The President lost sight of this idea when, in the Senate of the United States in December, 1860, he proposed no less than nine amendments to the Constitution in one day. He repudiated this idea when speaking for the votes of the American people in Nashville soon after his nomination for Vice President. He said:

"I hold, with Jefferson, that Government was made for the convenience of man, and not man for Government. The laws and constitutions were designed as instruments to promote his welfare. And hence, from this principle, I conclude that Governments can and

ought to be changed and amended to conform to the wants, to the requirements, and progress of the people and the enlightened spirit of the age."

* * * * *

"And let me say that now is the time to secure these fundamental principles, while the land is rent with anarchy and upheaves with the throes of a mighty revolution. While society is in this disordered state, and we are seeking security, let us fix the foundations of the Government on principles of eternal justice which will endure for all time."

And now, in 1866, the loyal people of the country say amen, and call upon the author to coöperate with their representatives in securing such amendments as the changed condition of things demand; and to conform "to the requirements and progress of the people and enlightened spirit of the age," and to "fix the foundation of the Government on principles of eternal justice which will endure for all time."

Because of the enunciation of such principles as I have quoted, and others corresponding thereto, the true men of this country rallied around Andrew Johnson, and triumphantly elected him to the second office within their gift.

I have quoted to some extent the declarations of the President to show that when a candidate for the suffrages of the people, and even later, he favored every proposition that the majority of Congress desire to adopt. If he will now, in his high position, carry out the principles he then avowed, a confiding people will rally around him and hold up his hands in the great work, and future generations will hold his name in grateful remembrance. Failing to do this, the terrible judgment of popular condemnation awaits him.

Mr. Speaker, I am no alarmist. I believe in a glorious future for this country, but on the express condition that we prove ourselves deserving such a future. The day of our peril is not yet past. Already in the North a large, and in some States a powerful, party who from the beginning of the war have sympathized more with the rebellion than the Government, are coming forward to meet their southern friends, and over the graves—not yet covered with the verdure of a single season—of the nation's fallen heroes, whom one has branded as murderers and the other has slain, they propose to shake hands, and pledge themselves to place this Government in the hands of those who but yesterday were striving to destroy it, and threaten revolution if their demands are not acceded to; and, "tell it not in Gath," they claim a President elected by loyal votes to coöperate with them. Already a Senator rises in his place and declares that "it is the duty of the President to ascertain who constitute the two Houses of Congress," and calls upon him to "recognize the Opposition here and the southern members as a majority of the Senate." Another Senator, at a recent meeting in this city, is reported to have said that "he believed to-day that a revolution is pending, and President Johnson would have better work for southern men than hanging them. He believed to-day that when Jeff. Davis left the Senate he was a better Union man than Abraham Lincoln. This he would

say on the floor in Congress before he got through."

The New York World suggests that the "present national Legislature should be put down by force," and the Constitutional Union talks about the "second advent of Cromwell of England, or of Napoleon of France;" while the Macon Telegraph echoes back from Georgia the sentiment of its northern allies, and declares that "the ballot-box is too slow a remedy for existing grievances," and adds:

"Let the President put down the rebellion in Congress and appeal to the ballot-box to sustain that."

And continuing further in the same strain, it says:

"We prefer peaceable means; but, these failing, the President should issue his proclamation declaring the Union fully restored, and inviting the southern members of Congress to enter the Capitol and take their seats. If refused admittance, a regiment of United States troops should be sent to put the southern members in their places."

The proclamation has been issued, but the southern members and the regiment of United States troops have not yet appeared.

The Chicago Times declares that it is the duty of the President to command the arrest of Stevens, Phillips, and Sumner, and their confederates in Congress and all over the country, for the crime of treason, and talks about the duty of the President to dissolve Congress by military power.

C. C. Burr, a Democratic orator and writer, in his paper, the Old Guard, in the issue of January, 1866, in eulogizing General R. E. Lee, says:

"It is a question which impartial and inexorable history will have to settle whether a success on his part would not have proved a benefit to his country."

He further says:

"When every Democratic editor will speak out his real thoughts and say boldly and defiantly that he believes men like General Robert E. Lee to be patriots, and men like Stanton and Seward to be traitors, there will be more honest men in the land than there are now, and there will be better hope for liberty—for our country's lasting peace and honor."

When I remember that those "Democratic editors" have never uttered a word in condemnation of the action of General Lee from the time he ignominiously betrayed the confidence of General Scott and the country, and basely drew his sword against the Government on whose patronage he had lived, to the present time, and that they have never ceased to apply the vilest epithets to the other two distinguished men named, I cannot avoid the conviction that Mr. Burr speaks what he knows on this subject.

For myself, standing in my place in the American Congress, representing a people who have freely poured out their treasure and their blood that this nation might live, and speaking for thousands of homes made desolate by the war, with the dust of the bravest and best of my constituents sleeping in patriots' graves, almost within sound of my voice, I am ready to swear, by all the sanctity of this free-will offering, that I will never consent, by my vote, that the Government of this country shall be

taken from the loyal citizens who have saved it by their blood and given to traitors. Could I be so false and base as to do so, I should expect the gory dead to rise up in judgment against me.

We have emerged from the greatest military struggle on record, and now a moral contest has commenced. Already we have had seeming defeat. Already our enemies boast that our chosen leader is in sympathy with them and against us. God grant that the experience of the war may not be repeated; and that we may not be subjected to three years of political McClellanism and Chickahominy anguish, before a Grant shall be found to lead us on to victory.

There is a grandeur in the contest we are entering amounting to the sublime. Our people have stood unawed and invincible in the midst of the thunder and smoke of terrible battle, when carnage and death held high carnival. It remains for us to show to the nations of the earth that we can stand erect in this moral conflict, and, with hearts strong and undaunted, meet every responsibility incident to the great work which devolves upon us. The result of this conflict is not doubtful. We may not now be worthy to enter the promised land of peace and prosperity which lies before us. Months and years even of severe conflict may intervene, but we shall surely win at last. While God sits on His throne, right and justice are indestructible. Men may attempt to raise their puny arms and fight against His purposes, but they will be paralyzed. The man who expects to turn the Union party of this country from its convictions of duty by executive influence, will soon find he has mistaken the men who compose it. They have written their principles in letters of blood and will not abandon them. The equal rights of all men before the law in this country is foreordained of God; and he who puts himself in the way of its accomplishment will find that the terrible "groundswell of popular judgment," referred to by the President in his speech of the 22d of February, will open a chasm beneath his feet in which he will be buried out of sight.

While the nation to-day, in her tears and ghastly wounds, bows her head before Him who has given us the victory, she makes the solemn pledge that justice and equal rights to all her people shall be the rule of her conduct, and that every element which tends to injustice and oppression shall be removed from the basis of the reconstructed Union, and that our glorious banner with every star restored, shining forth with a brighter luster than ever before, with liberty written in letters of living light on its ample folds wherever it may float, on land or sea, shall be the symbol, not merely of might and power, but of justice, and the highest civilization of human governments, inspiring the great heart of universal humanity with better hopes, and prompting to nobler endeavor.

















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